

**Amendments to the Abstract:**

Please replace the Abstract at page 43, with the following  
rewritten Abstract:

A color-separating and -recombining optical system includes a cubic- or square column-like first to fourth polarization beam splitters having polarization-splitting planes intersecting each other ~~like a character "X"~~ and wavelength-selective polarizing converters ~~each~~ for rotating the plane of polarization of a specific-color light component by 90 degrees. One of the converters is placed at a light-incident side of the first splitter. ~~Another of the converters and another~~ is placed at a light-emitting side of the fourth splitter. The first and ~~the~~ fourth splitters are provided at ~~a~~ light-incident side and ~~a~~ light-emitting side sides, respectively, of the optical system. The first and ~~the~~ fourth splitters are arranged ~~as~~ diagonally opposing each other. The remaining converters are placed between at least two inner facing planes of the first to ~~the~~ fourth splitters. At least the remaining converters and three of the first to ~~the~~ fourth splitters are joined ~~each other~~ to form an optical joint component with a gap between ~~the component and the~~ remaining one splitter. Opto-elastic constants for the first to ~~the~~ fourth splitters may have a relationship  $K_i < K_m$  and  $K_o, K_i < K_m < K_o$  or  $K_i < K_m < K_o$  in which  $K_i$ ,  $K_m$  and  $K_o$  denote the opto-elastic constants for the first splitter, the second and the third splitters and the fourth splitter, respectively. A light blockage may be provided at an intersection of the polarization-splitting planes and surrounded by the first to ~~the~~ fourth splitters, the light blockage preventing light leakage from the first to ~~the~~ fourth splitters.